



**USAID**  
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**AFGHANISTAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Next Generation of Afghan Business Leaders

**USAID builds a qualified workforce to advance economic development.**



Photo: USAID/ASMED

*Aziz Ahmad interns at Roshan Telecommunications. Roshan provides mobile phone service throughout Afghanistan – and on-the-job training to talented students like Aziz.*



Photo: USAID/ASMED

*Students take the internship program entrance examination in Qalat, Zabol province.*

Afghanistan's long-term economic development relies on well-educated young people with the skills to open new businesses and manage existing firms. Building a qualified Afghan workforce, particularly at the managerial level, is crucial to the country's economic growth. The U.S. Government is helping to develop a strong Afghan workforce through internships and professional training for the next generation of business leaders.

Through the Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project, USAID offers Afghanistan university students hands-on internships in a variety of business-related fields. Participants complete three months of theoretical training in management, marketing, and accounting, followed by three months of practical training through placements with Afghan companies and non-governmental organizations.

The program launched in 2007 with 63 students from Kabul University, and has since expanded to nine universities across Afghanistan. In 2008, USAID expanded the program to the underserved student populations in the south of Afghanistan. Two classes of interns have since graduated from Kandahar University. The program recently expanded again to provide internships to 150 high school students in Hilmand, Uruzgan, and Zabol provinces because there are no universities in these provinces.

Thus far, more than 858 young professionals, including 172 women, have completed the program and approximately 75 percent of the graduates received offers of full-time employment from their host companies.

"I am happy with every aspect of the internship program," said Noor Mohammad, an intern with the International Organization for Migration. "I really had no time or resources to study marketing, business management, or accounting. But through this program, not only have we studied these subjects, we are completing practical work using our knowledge."

The internship program is successfully training the next generation of business leaders. As the program continues to expand, it will help to build an Afghan workforce that can take the lead in the country's long-term economic development.